

Jackie King
TEED 522: Assessment
Pre-Post Assignment

1. Introducing the unit:

School: Chinook Middle School, Highline School District
Grade: 8th grade
Class: Language Arts
Unit duration: 5 weeks

Description:

This unit focuses on the power of persuasive writing. It uses aspects of today's world, the media and advertising, to convey that the art of persuasion is prevalent and influential. By being involved in this unit, students will hone their persuasive writing skills through the model of editorials. This unit asks students to consider what influences their personal choices, how persuasive techniques are used in the media, and what words and phrases carry persuasive power.

Alongside this, students will study aspects of persuasive writing such as thesis statements, facts versus opinions, and learn thinking and writing strategies to come up with a persuasive editorial. This unit is important for students to experience precisely because it asks students to consider how the media, advertising, and other factors influence their own choices. In other words, it connects directly back to students own experiences of the world in which they live. It is also important as it gives students knowledge of how persuasive techniques are used, and therefore, will allow them to think more critically about the choices they make. Finally, this unit is important for students to experience because it introduces them to a powerful writing model, persuasive writing, which is something they need to master for not only standardized testing, but also for the development of their essay writing skills.

2. Purpose of the Pre-Post assessment:

Looking at the big picture, assessment is important because it informs instructional decisions (Stiggins, p. 28). In other words, by gathering information about student performance, we get a clearer sense of what instructional decisions must be made. Stiggins makes it clear that assessment data informs students, teachers, school professionals, the community, and the state in their roles as important decision makers

(Stiggins, p. 29-32). Taking these ideas into consideration, my pre-post assessment will provide information about how well I taught my students- did they meet the unit level learning targets or not? It will also serve as a tool in my “positive impact on student learning” that is required by the state. My pre-post will give my students feedback about how much they’ve learned over the course of the unit. This will help them come away with a feeling of success and a sense of reward for their efforts (Stiggins, p. 37).

The purpose of the pre-assessment is to inform me on how much the students already know about the concepts of advertising, the media, and the role of persuasive language. It will also help me see if students have considered the concept that their choices can be influenced by others. In the post-assessment, I will measure how much the students now know about the same concepts, and thus how much they have learned over the course of the unit. This data will help me to see if my teaching methods were effective and if students met the learning targets. It will further show my students how their own effort has influenced their learning. From a pragmatic view, the pre-post assessments will be extremely beneficial in demonstrating my “positive impact on student learning” that demonstrates my effectiveness as a teacher and allows the state to certify me.

3. Unit level learning targets:

LT 1: Concept: Students will understand how the media, advertising and editorials use persuasive techniques. *EALR 2: The student understands the meaning of what is read. GLE 2.1: Demonstrate evidence of reading comprehension. GLE 2.3: Expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas in literary and informational text.*

LT 2: Concept: Students will recognize the role others play in influencing their choices, including the media and advertising. *EALR 1: Communication: 1.2 Understands, analyzes, synthesizes, or evaluates information from a variety of sources. GLE 1.2.2 (Grade 8) Analyzes mass media for bias and use of persuasive techniques and evaluates their impact.*

LT 3: Skill: Introduced: Students will analyze persuasive techniques in the media, advertising, and editorials to determine their effectiveness. *EALR 2 Reading (Grade 8): GLE 2.4.4: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s use of persuasive devices to influence an audience.*

LT 4: Skill: Introduced: Students will develop persuasive writing skills to create an original editorial. *EALR 2: The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes. GLE 2.1: Adapts writing for a variety of audiences. GLE 2.2: Writes for different purposes. GLE 2.3: Writes in a variety of forms/genres.*

LT 5: Skill: Practiced: Students will use the writing process, pre-writing, drafting, editing, to create an effective editorial. *EALR 1: The student understands and uses a writing process. GLE 1.1: Pre-writes to generate ideas and plan writing. GLE: Produces drafts. GLE 1.3: Revises to improve text. GLE 1.4: Edits text. GLE 1.5: Publishes to share with an audience.*

4. Pre-Post instruction assessment instrument:

I plan on using the same assessment instrument (see attached) for both my pre and post assessment. This will allow me to make direct comparisons on what my students knew before and what they know after my instruction.

My pre-post assessment will allow students to respond in short answer form to a series of questions that guide my unit in terms of over-arching themes and learning targets. Students will be asked to think about advertising, the media, and editorials in terms of persuasive writing and their effectiveness in influencing their choices. To reach the conceptual targets (LT 1 and 2) and the first skill target (LT 3), I will ask students to respond to short answer questions 1 through 3. Short answer is a particularly effective method of assessment for these targets because it gives students the opportunity to respond in a range of ways, instead of stressing one right answer. Likewise, it allows me to see evidence of students' analytical reasoning skills (Stiggin, p. 84). In the pre-assessment, I will be able to infer students' level of knowledge and current thinking about these concepts. Likewise, using the same assessment tool gives me a direct comparison to the level of knowledge and thinking they possess at the end of the unit with the post-assessment. For my skills targets (LT 4 and LT 5), students will respond to question 4, which asks them to respond to a prompt in editorial form. These targets deal with the creation of an editorial and general knowledge and application of the writing process. Therefore, it is particularly effective to assess students by having them create an original piece of writing, or engage in essay assessment (Stiggins, p. 85). This will also allow me to see what students writing skills in the form of persuasive writing were like before and after the unit so that I can effectively measure their progress. Similarly, using essay

assessment for these targets in my pre-post assessment is appropriate because it lets me see how students perform the skill of editorial writing and gives me concrete access to the development of their writing skills.

I will give the pre-assessment the day before the unit begins, and allow students 45 minutes to complete it. On the last day of my unit, I will give the post-assessment and again allow students 45 minutes to complete.

5. Possible distortions or bias:

There are a number of reasons why my assessment tools might not measure my students' ability to reach the targets accurately. I might have selected the wrong method of assessment to measure my targets; perhaps it is better to use short answer for all the questions instead of having an ambitious essay assessment where students create an editorial under a strict time frame. In this sense, time limits could be a major issue for students that are not linguistic/verbal learners and find it easy to respond in writing to prompts. This further means that my method of assessing students only by their written skills will lead to a greater distortion of what students really know. For example, looking at learning styles, a student that is a kinesthetic learner could definitely have a hard time focusing on the task of writing for a prolonged period of time and would perhaps do better with some form of performance assessment that allowed movement.

Another issue is readability. I might have selected questions that favor students whose first language is English. In other words, my questions might be too complex for not only ELL students, but also for students who do not have a cultural background that enables them to access and respond to the language I have used in my questions. Another issue might be that my questions are simply too vague for the age of my students, as middle school students often prefer concrete examples to big abstractions.

One aspect of bias and distortion I am particularly concerned about is evaluator bias. Will I expect that my students will not know as much at the beginning of the unit and be satisfied with any attempt to answer the question? And likewise, will I expect that my students will have a solid understanding of the concepts and skills at the end and assess them unfairly because of these expectations? Similarly, since the test is all written responses, will I favor those students that show solid writing abilities over those that

struggle with expressing themselves in writing? To combat this, I plan on only officially assessing students when I have both their pre and post assessment, so that I can compare their results as a measure of their success at meeting the unit level targets. So while I will glance at their pre-assessment to inform my instruction related to how much they already know, I will not use the results to summatively assess students and their progress until both the pre and post assessments have been completed.

Pre-Post Assessment Instrument:

Persuasive Writing and Advertising

Short answer- plus one essay question

1. Are your choices influenced by others? Explain your answer.
2. What persuasive techniques are particularly effective at convincing you?
3. What persuasive techniques do the media, advertisers, and editorials use? Why do you think they use them?
4. Respond in editorial form to the prompt: take a side!

Advertising *does or does not* affect me because....

Possible answers for short answer section:

1. Yes or No. Explanation and reasoning are most important- do they show higher-level thinking about the topic?
2. Persuasive techniques include: bandwagon, avant-garde, fact and figure, testimonial, transfer and claim words: weasel words, unique claim, rhetorical claim, unfinished claim. Again, what matters in this explanation is whether students make a connection between persuasive techniques and their own lives.
3. Students will need to identify either persuasive techniques: bandwagon, avant-garde, fact and figure, testimonial, transfer or claim words: weasel words, unique claim, rhetorical claim, unfinished claim. They might offer that editorials use facts and opinions and thesis statements as these are all things we discussed in class. Overall, I'm looking for a sense that they know that the media, advertisers and editorials use persuasive techniques in some form.

Rubric for essay

Criteria	Exceeding (3pts)	Meeting (2 pts)	Approaching (1pt)
Title	Title is catchy and interesting- clear link between title and topic of editorial	Title is used- clear link between the title and the topic of the editorial	Title is unclear- link between topic and title confusing
Persuasive techniques	Two or more persuasive techniques are used in the editorial	One persuasive technique is used in the editorial	No clear persuasive technique used
Fact and opinions	Two or more facts and opinions are present	One fact and one opinion are present	One fact or one opinion or a lack of both
Thesis	Clear thesis and link to facts and opinions present shows main ideas	Thesis present with links to facts and opinions	Thesis confusing or not present
Writing conventions/mechanics	One or fewer writing errors	Two to three writing errors	Three or more writing errors